

**SENATE BILL 388- AN ACT CONCERNING STATE PAYMENT RATES TO  
COMPANION-HOMEMAKER AGENCIES**

My name is Nancy Trawick-Smith. I am the Director of Community Companion and Homemaking Services, a non-profit Companion Homemaker service in Willimantic. I am speaking in support of **Senate Bill 388- An Act Concerning State Payment Rates to Homemaker-Companion Agencies**. We have contracted with the State Home Care Program for Elders to provide Homemaker-Companion services for the elderly participants of the program since we began business in 1992. Homemaker-Companions do a lot and are an important part of home health care. Homemakers are charged with making sure the elderly client's household is safe and clean. They shop, clean, make meals, and do laundry, all those household things that elderly can no longer do for themselves. More than a decade ago, access agencies for the State Home Care for Elders made it clear that they would also like Homemaker-Companions to transport their elderly clients to medical appointments and to take them shopping. There was never anything written about this in the contract that we sign year after year, there is no designated job description labeled Transportation Companion, and there has never been any extra compensation offered for gas reimbursement but it is, indeed, expected and after a decade it is a system that is pretty much counted on. Many people, as a matter of fact, don't realize just how much transportation Homemaker-Companion agencies actually do. In November of this year, our agency took clients to medical appointments 50 times just that month, while my good friend and competitor who runs a larger agency in the Eastern part of the state arranged, at the request of the access agency, for her Homemakers to take clients to 120 medical appointments in the same month. Senate Bill 388 proposes to raise the State rates of Companion-Homemaker Agencies. Since 1994 our Homemaker rates have increased by 6% while the Consumer Price Index has increased by 36.5 % and our Companion Rates have actually gone down 6 % since 1994. While Department of Social Services has kept our rates at a very low rate, our Liability Insurance, Bond, and Worker's Compensation Insurance has increased substantially. We need to give our employees raises, they deserve it and they'll leave if we don't. As I mentioned also, we have never received any extra funds to compensate these Homemakers-Companions for driving elderly clients in their own cars to medical appointments. I need to mention that case managers from access agencies get mileage reimbursement, Department of Social Services workers can use a State car to come audit our books, but the Homemaker-Companion who drives an elderly client to a necessary doctor's appointment gets no extra compensation. Even my son's friend who delivers Dominoes Pizza gets reimbursed mileage. We need to start valuing and compensating our caregivers better. As you know, we are going to need as many caregivers as possible when we baby boomers start reaching retirement age and quite frankly if we keep undervaluing them and underpaying them they are not going to be here ,

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